

Several Republicans in Congress are moving forward with an effort to strip Berkeley institutions of federal funds in retaliation for last week's City Council vote telling the U.S. Marines their recruiting station is not welcome in the city.

Meanwhile, Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates issued an apology today to those who serve in the military for any personal offense taken by the council declaration last week.

Six Republican senators, led by Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., and an Orange County representative today introduced companion bills called the Semper Fi Act of 2008 that seek to take away \$2.3 million from Berkeley earmarked in the 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill and give it to the Marine Corps.

The funds are designated:

- \$243,000 from the Chez Panisse Foundation, which provides 10,000 daily school lunches for Berkeley public schools.

- \$243,000 for the Ed Roberts Campus, a project that houses offices for disability organizations
- \$750,000 for water ferry service planned from Berkeley to San Francisco
- \$94,000 for a police and fire emergency communications system
- \$975,000 from UC Berkeley's Matsui Center for Politics and Public Service, which houses the papers of the late U.S. Rep. Robert Matsui

"Berkeley needs to learn that their actions have consequences," DeMint said in a statement. "Patriotic American taxpayers won't sit quietly while Berkeley insults our brave Marines and tries to run them out of town. Berkeley City Council members have shown complete ingratitude to our military and their families, and the city doesn't deserve a single dime of special pet project handouts."

Bates and others wondered why the legislators would want to punish institutions that have nothing to do with the city government.

"There's really no correlation between federal funds for schools, water ferries and police communications systems and the council's actions, for God's sake," said Bates, a retired U.S. Army captain. "We apologize for any offense to any families of anyone who may serve in Iraq. We want them to come home and be safe at home."

A spokeswoman for UC Berkeley noted the university has a long relationship with the U.S. military.

"We think it's unfortunate that these senators would target the University of California simply because the campus is located in the city of Berkeley," Marie Felde said. "We have a long history of ROTC at UC Berkeley, and military recruiters come here to recruit frequently. It makes no sense to punish the campus."

Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, who toured Berkeley last month promoting federal funding she had secured for her district, said in a statement that she would 'strongly oppose' the bill.

And a spokesman for Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., said she would "vigorously fight any effort to cut funding to these programs."

Ann Cooper, director of nutrition services for the Berkeley Unified School District, which receives federal funds through the Chez Panisse foundation, called the congressional effort "absurd."

"Why anyone would want to take healthy food away from children is just beyond me," Cooper said. "We're in the throes of a health crisis due to childhood obesity, and Berkeley is one of the very few cities in America that's actually really working on children's health through school food."

A spokesman for DeMint said the senator has been a longtime opponent of earmarks because they are hidden in spending bills and not debated. Bates said the council's declaration was a symbolic act against the war in Iraq, not against the "men and women who serve in the Marines or any other armed force."

Two Berkeley City Council members this week said they would ask the council on Tuesday to rescind the item that declares the Marines "uninvited and unwelcome intruders."

But Betty Olds and Laurie Capitelli, who wrote the proposal, did not move to retract three other related items the council approved at the same meeting: calling on residents to impede the work of any military recruiting station in the city; asking the city attorney to investigate whether the Marines violate city laws banning discrimination based on sexual orientation; and giving the

protest group Code Pink a free weekly parking space and sound permit to protest in front of the Shattuck Avenue recruiting station.

Code Pink plans to be at Tuesday's council meeting, as does a pro-military group called Move America Forward, which said Wednesday it is bringing the mother of the first Navy Seal killed in Iraq from Arizona. Move America Forward plans to stage a daylong protest in front the council chambers.

The Senate bill was introduced by DeMint, Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga.; Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla.; Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas; Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla.; and Sen. David Vitter, R-La. Rep. John Campbell, R-Newport Beach, introduced the companion bill in the House.